

## **REMARKS**

In the Official Action mailed on **05 February 2008**, the Examiner reviewed claims 1-6, 8-14, 16-22 and 24. Examiner rejected claims 9-14 and 16-22, and 24 under 35 U.S.C. § 101. Examiner rejected claims 1, 4, 5, 6, 9, 12, 13, 14, 17, 20, 21, and 22 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 based on Fauble et al. (U.S. Pub. No. 2003/0159054 hereinafter “Fauble”). Examiner rejected claims 2, 10, and 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) based on Fauble, and the term dictionary in Javvin. Claims 1-6, 8-14, 16-22, and 24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Elfering (WO 01/18631, hereinafter “Elfering”), in view of Shiu et al. (GB 2386710A, hereinafter “Shiu”). Examiner rejected claims 2, 10, and 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) based on Fauble. Examiner rejected claims 3, 11, and 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) based on Fauble, and Trostle (U.S. Patent No. 5,919,257, hereinafter “Trostle”). Examiner rejected claims 8, 16, and 24 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) based on Fauble, and the term dictionary in Microsoft press.

### **Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §101**

Examiner rejected claims 9-14 and 16-22, and 24 under 35 U.S.C. § 101. Specifically, Examiner rejected claims 9-14 and 16 for being directed to a computer-readable storage medium that is defined in the specification as including a carrier wave. Applicant has amended the specification to positively disavow the inclusion of carrier waves in the definition of a computer-readable storage medium, as per Examiner’s suggestion.

Examiner also rejected 17-22 and 24 as being merely functional descriptive material. Applicant has cancelled claims 17-22 and 24 without prejudice.

### **Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102**

Independent claims 1, 8, and 17 were rejected as being unpatentable over Fauble. Applicant respectfully points out that Fauble has many differences from the present invention and are directed to two distinct art areas within the computer arts. Fauble relates to secure communication methods, while the present invention relates to protecting private information within a database. While Fauble and the present invention both appear to include similar elements at first glance (one-way hashes, keys, etc), they are used in completely different manners which do not relate. For example, Fauble discloses using a one-way hash mechanism to create a hash of a plain-text message, and encrypting the same plain-text message with a public key of a second computer to generate an encrypted-cipher. Next, Fauble sends the hash and the encrypted-cipher to the second computer which decrypts the encrypted-cipher with its private key to reveal the plain-text message, and then hashes the plain-text message with the same one-way hash to determine if the hash matches the received hash indicating that the encrypted-cipher has not been tampered.

In contrast to Fauble, the present invention takes a piece of private information and uses a one-way hash to generate a lookup key for a database, and then stores the hash in the database (see paragraph [0021] of the Instant Application). In this manner, an item such as a social security number can be used as a primary key in a database without actually storing the social security number in the database in plain-text form. The only way to retrieve the record from the database is to already know the social security number, and to apply the same one-way hash to the social security number and using the resulting hash as a lookup key.

Accordingly, Applicant has amended independent claims 1 and 9 to clarify that the item of private information is used as a key for retrieving data from the database, and that the item of private information is not stored in the database

in plain-text. These amendments find support on page 5, paragraph [0021 of the instant application. No new matter has been added.

Hence, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 1 and 9 as presently amended are in condition for allowance. Applicant also submits that claims 2-6 and 8, which depend upon claim 1, and claims 10-14 and 16, which depend upon claim 9, are for the same reasons in condition for allowance and for reasons of the unique combinations recited in such claims.

### **CONCLUSION**

It is submitted that the present application is presently in form for allowance. Such action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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